Tips for Preparing a Successful Promising Practice Application

First Steps   Read the grant application document slowly and carefully without distraction.

Planning   The following steps will greatly increase your chances of success:

- Organize multiple planning meetings to prepare the application
- Involve key players from the school, community organizations and surrounding community in the planning process
- Allow plenty of time to prepare your proposal carefully and thoughtfully. Do not rush through the process.
- Create a checklist
- Delegate where possible

Writing Tips

General Presentation: Use plain English. Include a mixture of bullets, charts, and text. If you can't make a point in less than 35 words, the point needs to be rethought.

- Follow the formatting guidelines in the RFP carefully and precisely.
- Avoid cluttering pages with text, using several different fonts, spacing text erratically, and inserting pictures or symbols
- Use footers and include page numbers and the title of the application

Narrative:

- Structure your narrative by answering each question in the order listed in the RFP

Possible omission:

- Program Enhancement is not clearly articulated. Enhancement could mean that more students or grades are served, or that the quality of programming is enhanced, or both. Reread the definition of a promising practice. Do not propose the exact same program as executed the prior year. In other words, funds cannot be shifted from your 21st CCLC grant into a promising practice award. To borrow a business phrase, a promising practice proposal must show "value-added".

Budget:

Justify your funding request in accordance with project activities keeping in mind that all costs must be *reasonable* and *necessary* to carry out your project. Be specific about how the funds will be used and link them to items in your program narrative.

- Make sure costs for administration and direct instruction are reasonable and necessary.
- Include specific details in the budget narrative for each section such as precise FICA and other benefit costs, hourly wages, and number of contract days.
- Do not request funds for "miscellaneous" or other purposes using vague language.

- Include the total costs of the promising practice including other funds that support the practice.
- Include a specific timeframe for when the practice will be implemented and when money will be expended

Other Steps:

- **Proofread and complete a final edit on your proposal.** Ask colleagues <u>and</u> people outside of the education field who have not been involved in the proposal's development to proofread the proposal. Reviewers will not give your proposal the benefit of the doubt if information is missing, spelling errors change the meaning of sentences, or information is presented in a confusing manner.
- **Check your budget figures for consistency and accuracy**
- **Submit your proposal by the deadline date.**
- **Make copies.** Go through each copy carefully to make sure all the pages are included.
- **Call the VTDOE if you have questions.** It is better to ask than to speculate.

Preferred Practice Pattern	A Promising Practice
Staff	• Consistently uses high quality staff with advanced degrees, certifications, and/or multiple years of experience
Student participation	• Ratios are low • Attendance is regular and consistent • Student needs are clearly linked to the program
Qualitative and quantitative data	• Data supports outcomes participants attain from participating in the promising practice • Multiple measurements used • Objective indicators used
Evaluation plan	• Plan has been in place and has evolved/changed
Continual quality improvement	• Program, design • Staff, space • Materials, curriculum • Processes
Stakeholders	• Stakeholders from outside the organization recognize the programs value
Leadership	• Vision, high standards, advanced protocols and policies in evidence